

artpace  
ARTISTS ASSOCIATION

# TRACEY MOFFATT

*Handmade*

HUDSON (SHOW)ROOM

HSR 11.2

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### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tracey Moffatt is an Australian artist and filmmaker best known for her thematic photographs and video works, where she explores issues of femininity, sexuality, and cultural identification. During her 95.2 Artpace residency, she produced a series of photographs inspired by the female stars of roller derby popularized in 1970s American television. The dreamlike magenta images emphasized the theatricality and violence of the sport, creating an alternative vision of feminine beauty. In the years following her 1995 residency, she began work on a series of thematic video montages with collaborator and editor Gary Hillberg.

Moffatt received her BA in Visual Communications in 1982 from Queensland College of Art in Brisbane, Australia. Her photographic and filmic work is included in the permanent collections of museums throughout the world, including Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York; The Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Tokyo, Japan; Tate Gallery, London, England; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia. She recently held solo exhibitions at Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York (2011); Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2010); Bass Museum of Art, Miami, Florida (2010); Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, Australia (2010); and Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, Australia (2009).

### ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*Handmade* contains a comprehensive survey of Tracey Moffatt's thematic videos, created between 1999 and 2010. The seven montages—utilizing nearly 1,000 pre-existing television and film clips to



*First Jobs. Waitress 1982*

Tracey Moffatt, *Waitress*, 1982, 2008. Photo courtesy of the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York, New York

reconstruct new narratives—are ironic commentaries on Hollywood stereotypes such as love, race, and motherhood. Additionally, her exhibition features a photographic series titled *First Jobs*, a group of works that explore the unglamorous nature of entry-level employment in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Moffatt has a deep love of the movies and considers the video montages to be her “hymn to the glory of cinema.” The earliest montage, *LIP* (1999), features female bosses mistreating their sassy African-American housemaids, who then become insubor-

dinate and challenge their employers. This first video highlights issues of class, power struggle, and stereotypes present in many of her other montages.

*ARTIST* (2000) features clips from some of Hollywood's most iconic films about artists. Much of the video explores the struggles of the misunderstood. A clip from the movie *Lust for Life* (1956),



Tracey Moffatt, *MOTHER*, 2009. Video still courtesy of the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York, New York

featuring Kirk Douglas as troubled Vincent Van Gogh, sets the tone for the video. "*ARTIST* with its frustrated artists probably came from my realization that I was really going to be an artist and that it meant for the rest of my life I would have to work at it and there wasn't going to be any escape from the creative aggravation," states Moffatt.

*LOVE* (2003), a narrative about the highs and lows of amorous relationships, is constructed through the sequencing of humorous and sometimes uncomfortable material from a variety of cinematic sources. The story begins with a mash-up of idealized saccharine love scenes accompanied

by soft music. The charming introduction is short-lived; scenes of soured romantic relationships dominate the rest of the video. Like the unfortunate reality of many romances, Moffatt believed that the video needed "to start loving and sweet and then turn nasty."

*MOTHER* (2009) is perhaps the most emotional of the group of works for Moffatt. When she made *MOTHER*, the artist "bawled and bawled because there is so much motherly love and angst in it... my partner in the next room would say, 'Oh no you're not editing *MOTHER* again are you!'" Like her other shorts, this video highlights feminine stereotypes from the movies, this time with the female as a maternal figure who is obsessively doting, overly dramatic, and oftentimes awkward or embarrassing.

The photographic series *First Jobs* (2008) shares similar features to the video works that Moffatt produced throughout the 2000s. Organized by the theme of introductory employment, she takes found images from the 1970s and carefully manipulates them to create the look of hand-tinted black-and-white photographs. Careful observation reveals that she has inserted her smiling face into many of the photographs. With bright pastel coloring and a gleaming smile, Moffatt seems to take joy in some of the dreadful jobs she once held while supporting herself as a young artist-experiences (such as working as a waitress, meat packer, and parking lot attendant) resonate with her. "Secretly, though, I'm proud of myself. When I think of those early years, I realize that I was learning to be tough and work whether I liked it or not. I put my head down and was forced to be productive."

—Alexander Freeman, Education Curator